

**b. Sen. McCain Writes Letters to Secretary Babbitt,
President Clinton and Deputy Chief of Staff Ickes**

Sen. McCain read the July 12, 1996, Wall Street Journal article. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, McCain said he found the allegations in the article disturbing, particularly the allegations about campaign contributions influencing a decision concerning Indians at the Interior Department. He reacted by writing, in his capacity as Indian Affairs Committee Chairman, letters to President Clinton, Secretary Babbitt and Deputy Chief of Staff Ickes seeking answers about the factual allegations made in the article. McCain later explained that he thought it was important to get these answers to determine the course of action the Committee should take on Hudson, including whether it should hold hearings on the matter. In a press release issued July 19, the same day as the letters, Sen. McCain stated, “I intend to review the matter carefully in my capacity as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and proceed quickly with further investigation and oversight if warranted by the responses we receive to the questions we’ve raised in these letters.”

McCain wrote to Babbitt that he believed the facts gave rise to serious concerns about an appearance of impropriety. He stated:

I was profoundly disturbed to read in last Friday’s *Wall Street Journal* that top White House officials actively intervened last year to reverse a preliminary Interior Department decision to resolve a dispute between Indian tribes. . . . [T]he evidence cited by the *Journal* indicates that one group of tribes obtained White House attention and support primarily because they gave more campaign contributions to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) than did a competing group of tribes. The following events reported in the *Journal* are troubling to me and, at a minimum, contribute to an appearance of impropriety.

He then detailed certain specific facts alleged in the story, and repeated that he believed that “[t]he appearance of impropriety raised in the article is quite obvious – high-level White